

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5917

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR PINS PINT YO AL UK

SUBJ: GOY BLASTS REUTERS KOSOVO REPORTING

1. RECENT REUTERS BELGRADE REPORT ON INTERVIEW WITH KOSOVO LEAUGE OF COMMUNISTS HEAD MAHMUT BAKALI HAS BEEN DECLARED "ARBITRARY AND UNTRUE" BY GOY SECRETARIAT FOR INFORMATION. GOY TOOK EXCEPTION TO SIX STATEMENTS IN REUTERS REPORT, WHICH CONCENTRATED ON BAKALI'S REMARKS ON KOSOVO INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION, ALBANIAN IRREDENTISM AND YUGOSLAV-ALBANIAN RELATIONS.

2. REUTERS REPORTED THAT BAKALI HAD SAID (1) ALBANIAN NATIONALISM HAD REAPPEARED LATELY IN KOSOVO; (2) THIS NATIONALISM WAS SIMILAR TO THAT OF DISSIDENT MAOIST GROUPS IN WEST; (3) A NUMBER OF NATIONALISTS RECENTLY ARRESTED HAD BEEN UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE ALBANIAN WORKER'S PARTY, BUT NO DIRECT CONNECTION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED; (4) THE REASON FOR RECENT ALBANIAN CRITICISM OF YUGOSLAVIA WAS THE YUGOSLAVIA HAD CONDEMNED NATIONALISM; (5) "YUGOSLAVIA WANTED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA, BUT THAT DID NOT MEAN CHANGING FRONTIERS";

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AND (6) BAKALI HAD CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT TWELVE ALBANIANS

HAD BEEN CONVICTED FOR DISTRIBUTING ANTI-STATE LEAFLETS AT PRISTINA UNIVERSITY IN DECEMBER 1974.

3. GOY CALLED REUTERS REPORT "DISTORTED AND FALSE", REPLYING THAT BAKALI HAD INSTEAD SAID THAT (1) "PROSPECTS OF ALBANIAN NATIONALISM HAD BEEN DIMINISHED; (2) "ALBANIAN IRREDENTISM HAD A RECAPITULATORY BASIS, EVEN WHEN IT PRESENTED ITSELF IN THE GUISE OF MARXISM-LENINISM"; (3) THE IRREDENTIST GROUP USED PHRASEOLOGY TAKEN FROM THE IDEOLOGY OF THE ALBANIAN WORKER'S PARTY; (4) ALBANIA'S ATTACKS ON YUGOSLAVIA WERE THE RESULT OF INTERNAL ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENTS; (5) BAKALI DID NOT MENTION BORDER CHANGES AT ANY TIME DURING INTERVIEW; AND (6) BAKALI CITED "UNTRUE" REUTERS REPORTS OF 1974 PRISTINA DISORDERS AS PROOF OF "MALICIOUS REPORTING ABOUT YUGOSLAVIA IN THE FOREIGN PRESS".

4. COMMENT: REUTERS CORRESPONDENT BERT CLACK HAS CONFIRMED TO US THAT BAKALI DID INDEED MAKE STATEMENTS REPORTED IN REUTERS DISPATCH. CLACK COMMENTED "IF HE'S GOING TO SAY THOSE THINGS, HE CAN'T EXPECT US TO JUST BOTTLE THEM UP". CLACK'S REPORT HAS RING OF TRUTH TO IT AND IT MAY BE THAT BAKALI, WHO IS KNOWN HERE AS ONE OF FLASHIER AND MORE INTELLIGENT PARTY LEADERS, GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY DURING INTERVIEW AND OVERSTEPPED BOUNDS OF CONFIDENTIALITY. IN ANY EVENT, GOY HAS ONCE AGAIN SHOWN ITS EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO ANY FOREIGN COMMENTARY ON ONE OF ITS BIGGEST POTENTIAL PROBLEM AREAS - KOSOVO. SILBERMAN

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